

# MADemoiselle LUCILE

BY ROY NORTON

Drawing by Armand Both

A REAL soldier may not stray far afield and be sure of himself," Colonel Dunois said as we resumed our walk after a sun-tanned young officer had halted us at the corner of the Rue Beaux Arts and Rue Bonaparte and inquired the way to the Boulevard Saint Michel. "A man who can find his way through a camp on the blackest night or unerringly head toward the oasis in the desert becomes lost when he is thrown into unaccustomed surroundings. The most efficient General I have ever known, a man whose judgment in battle was unerring and swift, made a *faux pas* at his first presidential reception that nearly caused him disgrace. He blundered as badly as did Lepard, Villalon, and I when we were detached for special duty in America." His eyes twinkled with recollection, and he laughed softly and stroked his white goatee.

"It was after the Algerian campaign, where we became known as 'The Captains Three'; yes, sometime after. Come to think of it, we had had a somewhat trying experience in Washington, had participated in that Spanish-Moroccan affair, and again returned to Paris before we were given this singular duty, more fit for detectives and secret service men than for us; but who may question the ways of the French war department? Certainly not I, who know that it seldom blunders.

"Villalon had become an enthusiast on ordnance and explosives and was giving instructions to the cadets at St. Cyr, I was dancing attendance at the President's palace, and Lepard was chafing under garrison duty, when we three were summoned to the war office. We met in the antechamber and wondered what was to answer. In the old days we had been called on many occasions to expiate reckless acts of our youth; for I suppose we were what they called us, a trio of daredevils, always slipping along the edge of discipline and escaping rating only because we performed feats that would have cost less fortunate men their lives; but we had grown circumspect, hence vaguely questioned one another as to the cause of our summons.

LIKE three culprits we were ushered into the presence of Monsieur Dupré, no less than the Minister of War, and at sight of him our spirits rose and we were convinced that had we to account for some exploit our superior officer would have been there with him.

"He smiled and studied us curiously as we saluted. 'So,' he said, 'you are the Captains Three, the men who by a ruse frightened an army of Arabs at Sid el Hama, have been rated for dueling, and yet time and again have ventured where other men dared not and miraculously returned? So you are the men!'

"Villalon and I stood like statues; but Lepard, insouciant and handsome, had the temerity to laugh aloud.

"His Excellency, the Minister of War, is pleased to flatter and reprove us in the same breath," he said, and laughed again.

"Monsieur Dupré joined in, motioned us to seats, and we breathed easier. His first question was terse and to the point:

"What would the Captains Three think of an assignment requiring wit, strategy, and fearlessness, one in which others of our national secret service have failed? Would they attempt to learn something of which France, menaced by the Germans, stands in need?"

"There was a clatter of belts, a rustling of uniforms, and before him stood three men who simultaneously answered, 'At your service, sir!'

"He smiled at our enthusiasm in answering that call which none may disregard, the summons of patriotism.

"America," he said, after we had again resumed our seats, 'has in her possession an explosive more powerful than any known to another nation in the world. That inventive genius, Hudson Maxim, has discovered and developed something that France must have. So carefully guarded is her secret that none has been able to gain knowledge of it.'

"Frowning momentarily at a bundle of reports he held in his hand, he threw them on his desk with a gesture of contempt, saying, 'So far the Germans have been no more successful than ourselves. We have learned that this explosive is manufactured in a plant standing in a Government reservation and guarded by the employees, assisted by a squad of soldiers. Although accessible, no outsider has been able to enter it. We want plans or photographs of the machinery employed, a knowledge of the process, and an analysis of the ingredients. I am told by General Rodet that Captain Villalon, being the best equipped man in France for the quest, should go, and with him you, his comrades, who are adroit and brave. Do you dare?"

"To ask us if we dared was to receive an affirmative answer, though he braved us to face an army.

"Lepard, impulsive and quick, answered for all three, 'Your Excellency, there has never been anything in our lives that we did not dare!'



"A Major of the United States Army Cautioned Them Not to Hurt Him."

"The minister looked for a moment as if contemplating reprimand; but, smiling, said, 'General Rodet was right; you are the men. If you fail, other efforts will be vain.' He dismissed us to receive further instructions from a staff officer.

OUR ardor for this new enterprise was keen, even though we were unused to such endeavor. Like three boys we made preparations for sailing. It was like going to the front again where adventures and hazards might be met. And on the voyage across the Atlantic we were still boys and enjoyed the freedom of civilian dress, which we wore for the first time in years. It was indeed a great venture into unknown fields.

"In your country you have a Province—I should say State—called New Jersey, a glory of lakes and mountains, of fields and forests. Up in its heart is a lake nestling high in clear cut hills like a great gem in splendid setting. Lofty trees, dense and untrimmed, cover the mountain slopes, and in their shade nestle fern and vine. Years ago your Government reserved it, placing thereon a plant for secret experimental work. At that time no more isolated spot could have been found. There it stood, a monstrous enterprise devoted to death, in the place where gentle lovers of beauty should have lived. Years went on, until now, men, having cast about for summer homes, chose the shores of this lake. Boathouses cast shadows into the quiet waters, and canoes and launches traverse its surface.

"One fine summer's day, after passing through the heated city of New York, we registered at a delightful hotel standing high upon a cliff above the water's edge. The proprietor, Monsieur Durban, was a much traveled Englishman, hence we were under some apprehensions lest he might have met us before. His acceptance of our statements that we were merely travelers enjoying America's mountain resorts allayed our fears.

"That night we secured a boat and rowed out over the lake where we might talk without restraint. Other craft filled with merry-makers passed us, now a motorboat throwing white waves, with its sharp snapping bark giving warning of its approach, or again some sloop under sail, swimming silently along like a spirit of the night. We came to a bend, and there, on the far shore, a long row of fiery, unblinking eyes threw rays on the water.

"Villalon rested on his oars and stared, as did Lepard and I. Here was the goal of our mission, the outlying building of the powder plant, squatted there as if doing sentry duty and guarding aggression from the lake. We rowed back to our landing that night with a well defined plan calculated to allay or disarm suspicion as to our identity and purpose. We decided that we must so enter the social life of the

lake as to render our presence unnoteworthy. Nothing other than a campaign of exasperating slowness was feasible.

"The open hearted hospitality of your countrymen aided us in our campaign. We spoke the English tongue with such perfection that we had no difficulty, and indeed that of Lepard and Villalon was nearly flawless. Mine was what you know. We were accepted as French gentlemen of means sufficient to gratify our fancy, globe trotters of the class for which England has become famous. Being fairly equipped as a party to gain admission where each must do his part, it was but a short time until we were welcomed to many homes in that ideal spot.

I CANNOT remember how many days we had been there when we were invited to a tennis party at the home of a Mr. Wharton—doubtless Lepard could; for it was there we met Lucile Marvin. Formed in that graceful, strong mold that has made American girls famous, with hair that in the shadows was dull gold, but in the sunlight scintillated and glittered, eyes that were blue, keen, and yet as tender as the memory of love, she came near being as beautiful a girl as ever I have met—and I make the reservation in deference to one I loved. Her face bore lines of warmest sympathy, yet carried with it the suggestion of strength that makes from peasant women Jeanne d'Arc.

"From the outset there was some strange status between her and our gallant comrade Lepard. Perhaps it was the law of opposites that attracted the girl of poise to the reckless, graceful soldier whose blood boiled hot to feed a soul of flame, and who, despite the fact that he was in his early thirties, was a veteran of hard fought wars. Fate cast them to play opposite parts. In the toss-up for the initial game of tennis they were opponents, admiring yet combating each other. In a chess tournament 'neath the shade of the great chestnut trees she was his rival and bested him. We played a silly little prize game as the evening advanced, and she won, with him the closest second. She even dared him to the foils and proved no mean antagonist to one of the best blades that France has produced, and I, who am called the master swordsman of France, know whereof I speak, for I umpired the bout. From the start it was as though they two, born with remarkable talents and similarities, were pitted to play against each other to the end.

"Need I tell you of the inevitable? The day at the Wharton home proved but the beginning of others in a chain wherein Lepard, the gallant and susceptible, passed many hours with Mademoiselle Lucile. Now it was the canoe on the lake, with him singing gondolier songs and picking weird harmonies from a mandolin; again tests of skill wherein each



strove to best the other. I sometimes wonder what might have been had there not dwelt in the subconscious self of Lepard the recollection that he was there for a grim and certain purpose, that of discovering a nation's weapon of strength.

"We cautiously gathered information to fortify us in our mission and learned something of the habits of the United States officers of the plant, all of whom we found unapproachable. The men who worked in that terrifying place where danger was a constant companion were sober, industrious, and carefully selected. Mind you, I do not say that we who had come so far to gain much would have hesitated at anything save bribery; so I tell you we tried to find some man whose tongue, in hospitality's glow, would wag freely, some other who was prone to be loquacious, or yet another who had a willingness to betray for some injury, fancied or real. Yet of all the men on the reserve not one was susceptible, and I grant you it is a truly American trait.

AT last on a moonlit night we made a reconnaissance of the reserve. Rowing our boat along the deeper shadows of the shore line where the trees hung low and still above the laggard inland surf, we gained the shore. We discovered an old abandoned road leading outside the reservation which was barred as we barred the trenches in the Spanish campaign, with wires that carried sharpened barbs where horse and foot came to grief and heaped themselves upon their slain. We could not penetrate far that night; but the way was opened.

"The following day there was a regatta on the lake from which we dared not be absent. To win a paltry cup those Americans raced motorboats costing a soldier's lifetime pay, and the waters were alive with craft of every kind. We were invited, among others, to make up a launch party, and in a roomy boat turned through the maze, where Lepard caught sight of Lucile and waved a familiar greeting. I heard an exclamation, and thought some man in her boat had called. I could not see all the faces that surrounded her, and our launch, crossing the course rapidly to clear the course for the starter's gun, dropped Lucile's boat from sight.

THE night of the regatta we were guests of a yacht club. We arrived late, our launch having suffered a mishap to its engine, and passing into the brilliantly lighted reception hall were for the moment dazzled. There were men in summer garb and such an array of handsome women as may be seen nowhere outside of France, save in America. In one of these groups and facing us stood Lucile. A most astonishing thing happened. She did not advance to greet us as had become her custom; but stared direct at Lepard as if studying him. At least that was the impression I received at the instant. Lepard did not appear to notice and crossed quickly to her, extending both hands, one of which she accepted, and they moved away, she talking with unusual brilliance and charm.

"I have never been able to account to myself for the feeling of danger to our enterprise that passed over me that evening, as I loitered here and there talking or listening to the chatter of those near at hand. It may be that I was nervous to the point of apprehension, and it seemed to me that wherever Villalon and I passed we caught a new look in the eyes of those around us; not unfriendly, mind you, only curious. If we sat on the veranda the conversation dropped to a lower pitch; if we strolled along the graveled walks beneath the soft rays of the Japanese lanterns, those we passed turned to look at us.

"It affected me to such an extent that I led Villalon to a secluded spot and voiced my anxiety. 'It is time for us to act,' I said. 'For some reason I feel that delay means defeat. What do you think of it?'

"The glow of Villalon's cigarette showed how vigorously he was thinking. 'Gaston,' he finally answered, 'you are right. When shall it be?'

"'Daybreak,' I said, 'should find us in the woods behind the reservation. Let us find Lepard and make our departure.'

"Our comrade's musical laughter attracted us to an arbor, where we found him with Mademoiselle Lucile. With them we strolled back to the clubhouse, and when opportunity offered carried him away and told him of our fears and plans. I saw that he was disconcerted.

"'I wish,' he said, 'you had not been compelled to make your plans so suddenly.' He pursed his lips and went on, 'I've made an appointment to go bass-casting with Mademoiselle Lucile at four o'clock in the morning. She has boatmen engaged. Awkward, isn't it?'

"I was tempted to swear at him. Sorrowing over the loss of an excursion with a girl when duty called! It was unbelievable and a part of that great mystery, the way a woman can dominate the strongest man.

"I asked with some heat, 'You wish us to go alone?'

"He caught my reproof and refused to become angry in turn. He laughed and put his arm over my shoulder. 'Nay, comrade,' he said, 'be not so hasty to cut me off from the pleasure of the occasion. I go to break the appointment.'

"Telling Mademoiselle Lucile what?'

"That is difficult,' he answered thoughtfully. It was apparent that he was perplexed. 'I can think of no excuse,' he added a moment later as if to himself and then, 'Well, she needs none. I shall merely say that in pleasurable anticipation of the outing with her I overlooked another engagement.'

"He whirled on his heel and walked away. We

saw him rejoin her on the veranda, make his adieu, and in a few minutes we were on the lake headed toward our hotel with the water curling away from the launch's bow. We were silent that night, knowing that on the morrow the success or failure of our mission would be known and that perhaps the fate of France herself was dependent thereon.

"Ah! Our country seemed so far away! It was as if we could stare out to the dim horizon line where the hills cut the moonlit sky and fancy that away beyond she waited and watched for our return. On the eve of battle, surrounded by overwhelming forces of barbaric foemen, when it was written in the stars that on the morrow we were to die, I have slept. This night I tossed and turned. There was so much at stake!

IT was yet dark when I rose and dressed. Before I had finished Villalon softly entered and I knew that he too had endured a sleepless night. Together we tiptoed to Lepard's room. He was sleeping as peacefully as a child, his head pillowed on his bared muscular arm. We roused him, and he sprang cheerfully out of bed and hurried into his clothing.

"Have you ever been called to make an attack in the early morning hours? Well, that was the way I felt when we slipped from the hotel to the landing and into our boat. Villalon and Lepard took the oars and I the tiller. The moon had gone and clouds obscured the greater portion of the skies. I had to bend low to descry the dark and silent shore lines. Around a point where cottages clustered we nearly struck a reef, and once, later, smashed against a snag when we drew too close to shore. When the dull lights of the acid house stared at us we slowly made our way to the place where a clump of heavy overhanging brush and foliage would serve to hide our boat. We pulled it up for security and threw ourselves down to wait for the light to grow a little stronger.

"We did not talk, but watched for the gray dawn to silhouette the hills. When at last it was light



"In Her Voice  
Was a Plea  
for Forgiveness."

enough to see our footing we traveled away from the boat till we came to the old road that, overhung at the edges and half obliterated, led away into the mountains. We had gained enough information to know at about what point we should leave it to cross an abandoned clearing. The grass, tall and wet with dew, would have given us cover in the daylight; but we passed through it crouched lest some watchman might by accident see us. We came to the woods again and crept through to a trail which we followed cautiously; but we were on the wrong lead. This mistake cost us an hour, and when we regained the high clearing and took another direction the light was strong upon us. The birds had awakened and were greeting us with frightened flights.

"At last the wire obstructions! We crept up to them and over without sighting a watchman. We were beside a great metal storehouse. We passed it, to find ourselves confronted with another dense growth of woods which we slowly worked through, and then—the plant was before us! Below us there lay, in the cup of the mountain, a beautiful little lake, shut in by the purple morning mist. On its shores, behind massive log and earthen barricades,

were several small houses devoted to the work. Each had collapsible windows of comparatively huge dimensions, showing the fearful hazard of the work; for they were intended to blow outward at the slightest concussion of air. In front of each of these small fortresses was a grassy slope, and on a rack by each barricade were white suits and rubber shoes for three workmen.

"Villalon whispered to us in explanation, 'The work is so hazardous that but three men are allowed in each place. Their clothing is changed, that there may be no metal about them when they enter. They are working with a fearfully high explosive. When we get there we must be careful, and if we gain access to one of the houses must remove our shoes; for the scrape of a heel upon the floor might blow us all to fragments.'

AS cautious as must have been the American Indians who once roamed that country, we slipped from tree to tree and covert to covert, working our way down to the nearest house. We sighted a lone watchman pacing his rounds along a tiny tram track that ran from building to building for the transportation of raw material, and lay flat to the ground till he had disappeared through a narrow cañon leading like a gateway from the mountain wall that held the lake. Then, satisfied that we dared take a reckless chance and hurry for one of the barricades, we tripped and stumbled downward. The houses had no locks, so certain were the explosive men that no one could gain that far into the reservation, and Villalon, after jerking off his shoes, stepped inside the one nearest.

"Through the doorway I could see him smelling chemicals here and there and examining the stuff that lay around on trays, some of which he had the temerity to weigh on scales near at hand. He was not gone long; but it seemed an age.

"Daylight had come, and when he came hurrying out he told Lepard, who carried a small and almost perfect camera, to take such pictures of the machinery as he could get. After another forced wait we ran single file across the open space and grassy sward to another house which Villalon entered. He was still within when from the hill back of us came a long shrill whistle. It was answered by another and yet another, until the hills were alive with that high, fierce call. Villalon was working as calmly as ever within and Lepard was snapping his films with regularity, as if unhearing the din that was sweeping over the mountains.

"'Come!' I cried. 'For God's sake come! We must escape to cover!'

VILLALON rushed out, slipped on his shoes, and we dropped low and ran around the barricade to the opening, and then made a quick dash for the nearest clump of undergrowth, which was but a few feet distant. We ran crouching, pausing only to see if any living thing could be seen, and hearing from the distance that constant call of whistles. It was plain to me that they must have sighted our trail where we had crossed the wire barriers; but I could not quite understand, if that was the case, and they had among them men so keen in woodlore, why they did not come directly upon us. We tried to run between the two sounds of alarm that seemed coming toward a common center. Suddenly Lepard, who was in the lead, dropped to his knee, gave a muttered curse, and looked back toward us. We crept forward to discover the cause of his perturbation.

"Above us towered an unbroken wall of rock, stretched away on either hand till lost in the forest. Its base was bare of cover. To scale it appeared an impossibility, and to run along its base to find another way meant discovery; for the distance was hopeless. And yet, startlingly close to our left, there sounded another clamor of whistles. We listened. They were answered from the opposite end of the mountain wall to our right.

"They're hemming us in against this cliff,' Lepard whispered, 'driving us like wild beasts, and all waiting for the final rush!'

"He had told the palpable truth. We were shut in. Nearer and nearer they came, and now we could tell from the sound of breaking twigs that they were coming in line and beating the brush as they advanced to make certain that we were in front of them. We made one last gallant attempt to escape. Throwing off our shoes, we boldly ran to the mountain wall, which, bare and gray in the morning light, cut us off. Lepard sprang like a cat, finding places here and there for fingers and toes, and Villalon, at my left, did likewise. Of their movements I was but dimly aware, as I was straining every nerve and muscle in my own frantic endeavor to climb. A jutting rock shut off all view of my comrades before I had scaled many feet. I had risen above the tops of the highest trees in that interminable struggle and was sore distressed for breath when I found a friendly little shelf, barely wide enough to give me rest. Panting and exhausted, with perspiration starting from every pore, I for the first time paused.

THE sun had lifted above the eastern hills and cut the shadows and mist from the lake which lay in the distance with its deadly buildings clustered round it. From the midst of the trees beyond tall smoke stacks were volleying smoke heavily. I dreaded to look directly downward; for I am not fitted by nature to scale sheer heights and am subject to giddiness. The whistling had ceased. I leaned a little from the shelf on which, with my back

Continued on page 19



## A Delicious Drink BAKER'S COCOA



Registered  
U. S. Pat. Office

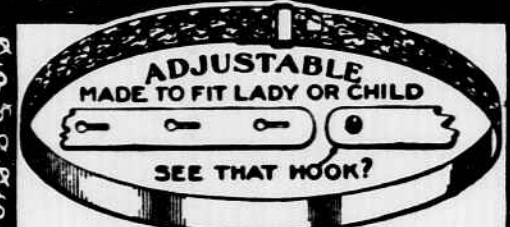
Made by a scientific blending of the best tropical fruit. It is a perfect food, highly nourishing and easily digested.

52 HIGHEST AWARDS

Walter Baker & Co. Ltd.

Established 1780 Dorchester, Mass.

## EASY MONEY FOR LIVE AGENTS



The ladies just can't refuse to buy this beautiful new adjustable bracelet. Everyone who sees it, wants it, and that's why it's the biggest selling novelty of the last five years. Handsome, wears for years and can't bind the arms or be lost. It's a live money maker for live agents. No experience needed. Send me your name and address.  
S. R. Miller, Pres., 947 Royal Bldg., Detroit, Mich.

## FREE RUBY

WRITE AT ONCE For Genuine Native Arizona Ruby. Remarkable Offer! Don't Miss It!

We will send it to you absolutely FREE prepaid, to introduce our genuine Mexican Diamonds. These Diamonds exactly resemble finest genuine blue-white Diamonds, stand acid tests, are cut by experts, brilliancy guaranteed permanent, and yet we sell at 1-10 the cost. Best people wear them. SPECIAL OFFER—For 50c deposit, as guarantee of good faith, we send on approval, registered, either 1/2 or 1 carat Mexican Diamond at special price. Money back if desired.

Illustrated Catalog FREE. Write today and get Ruby FREE. MEXICAN DIAMOND IMP. CO., Dept. AT 10, Las Cruces, New Mex.

## Weak Instep

causes pains through the feet and legs similar to rheumatism. You can prevent all this by wearing the

50c A PAIR. C & H ARCH Instep Supports

C & H ARCH SHANK CO., Dept. D, BROCKTON, MASS.

## AGENTS 200% PROFIT

Handy, Automatic HAME FASTENER. Do away with old hame strap. Horse owners and teamsters will about them. Fasten instantly with gloves on. Outwear the harness. Money back if not satisfactory. Write today for confidential terms to agents. F. Thomas Mfg. Co., 710 Wayne St., Dayton, Ohio

## AGENTS! \$18 to \$30 A WEEK SURE

Farmers' "Ever-Ready" Tool Kit 10 TOOLS. Agents going wild over results. M. Snyder made \$46 in two hours. Joseph Pine took 65 orders in two days. M. D. Finch sold 42 in 9 hours. Had no experience. To show it means a sale. FREE SAMPLE to workers. FOOTE MFG. COMPANY, Dept. 947, DAYTON, OHIO

## 25 COLORED U. S. VIEW POST CARDS 10c

All different. No trash. Our great EXCHANGE CLUB offer free. Send today. Ideal Co., Dept. 13, Dorchester, Mass.

## U. S. METAL POLISH

Indispensable in Every Household 3 oz. Box 10c. At Your Dealers or Geo. W. Hoffman, Indianapolis, Ind.

## Mademoiselle Lucile

Continued from page 5

to the wall, I stood, and forced myself to look downward.

"There in an excited group stood more than fifty men, some garbed as workmen and others wearing soldiers' uniforms. They paid no attention whatever to me, but even as I looked surged to the left with hoarse shouts. Again that clamor of whistles, and, answering it like unleashed hounds, the men ran in the direction of the sound. Suddenly I saw a rustle of brush far over, and then discovered a man bent low and madly running. He was bareheaded and in shirt sleeves, and now and then an unfriendly bush tore at him as though to retard his progress. It was Villalon!"

"In watching his terrific struggle I forgot my perilous position. He bounded this way and that, as does the cornered hare when hounds are close. In sympathy I could feel his straining lungs and rushing blood. How hopeless his effort! I could see them deliberately closing in on him from many directions. He was running into the arms of another party that had emerged from the dense forest into a small glade. I tried to shout him a warning, forgetting that such a call could not be heard at that distance with the noise of pursuit all round him. It was over in a moment. They sprang to meet him. He struck furiously right and left, there was an indescribable swirl of human figures twisting and whirling, and when the group disintegrated, a figure lay supine on the ground in its midst.

"Then directly below me I heard fierce, snarling shouts. Into the open space below my aery figure appeared to bound with frenzied leaps and strides. It too was bareheaded and as it ran stripped itself to the waist. It was Lepard, who had descended when he discovered the plight of Villalon and was running to his rescue!

I SHALL never know how I, fuming with rage and desperate, made my way back down the face of that precipice. I was not conscious of bleeding hands and toes, of torn clothing, of short slides, perilous falls, and agonized scratchings at the face of the hard and unfeeling cliff. I tore off after Lepard, stumbling, falling, and adding to my bruises. I swore that if they had killed Villalon I should die taking toll for his life. I was sobbing with grief, anger, and physical stress when I burst from the brush.

"Villalon was sitting, weakly, while a man was bandaging a handkerchief round a wound in his head. Lepard was being led by two burly men who strained to and fro as he struggled. A man in officer's uniform, showing that he was a Major in the United States army, was cautioning them not to hurt him.

"I saw that we were defeated and further effort futile. 'Stop!' I commanded, advancing toward them. 'Louis, we're beaten. There's no use to fight.'

"Lepard looked at me with bloodshot eyes. 'Some of them paid for striking Jean,' he commented, and I discovered that several men were nursing bruises. To my astonishment, however, none showed the slightest trace of anger or animosity. Their attitude was that of admiration rather than enmity. The officer came toward me.

"You are Captain Dunois of the French army?' he asked, and then without waiting for a reply, 'I am Major Richardson.'

"I couldn't help but like him. He was a fine officer. I accepted the hand and admitted my identity.

"You have made a brave endeavor,' the Major said, smiling, 'and I am sorry that we had to use such force to subdue—' He motioned his hand toward Villalon, who was now being lifted to his feet.

"Captain Villalon,' I said.

"Then this, I take it, is Captain Lepard?' he said advancing toward Louis and again extending his hand. 'You are something of a fighter, Captain,' he said with utmost good humor. 'You strike very hard and fast. I'm glad to know you.'

"They recovered Villalon's coat; but Lepard's had been left high up on the mountain ledge. Then, escorted by at least a hundred and fifty men, we were led down past the lake which we had worked so hard to gain, out through the cañonlike opening, past great buildings whose smokestacks were belching for the day's work, across a field where huge shells were piled, and down a winding road to a small building surrounded by a veranda.

THE superintendent's offices,' the Major explained; but we, defeated and humiliated by our failure, made no reply.

"A man waved his hand. The workmen scattered to their posts, leaving us with four soldiers and the officer. Villalon had recovered enough of his strength so that he walked unsupported save for the faithful Lepard's arm, and the Major and I headed the procession to the veranda. A door opened. We were beckoned inside and confronted by a stern, keen faced American of that age which spreads gray around the temples and stiffens the lines of the mouth.

"Ah!" he said grimly, 'the French Government wishes our secret and sends you gentlemen to obtain it? I am distressed that I should have been compelled to meet you in such circumstances.' He looked at Villalon and his face softened. 'Are you suffering?' he asked in a more kindly tone. 'I hope you are not badly wounded.'

"A mere scratch,' Villalon assured him, 'scarcely to be called a wound.'

"The superintendent nodded. 'I'm glad,' he said with sincere emphasis, and then turning

went on, 'I must make certain that you are the men of whom I have been warned. You must be identified.'

HE nodded to a man who had stood with his back against a door which he now opened, and through it came—Mademoiselle Lucile!

"Lepard sprang to his feet, with his head thrown back.

"She smiled gravely and bravely, but with an effort, it seemed to me. 'These are the men,' she said in a voice so low that nothing but the clearness of her enunciation made the words audible. And then she advanced straight to Lepard, who was white and cold. 'Captain Lepard,' she said, 'I am sorry to have been your undoing.' There was in her voice a distinct plea for forgiveness. 'I respect you, believe me,—for who, knowing the lives of the Captains Three, could do otherwise?—but I love my country. Her secrets must be preserved.'

"She paused for an instant and looked down as if rebuffed by his unwavering and repellent front. She went on in a voice that was dead and passionless and from which all the gladness of other days had gone, giving place to sorrow so pronounced that it was like one chanting a dirge over dead friendship.

"I took you and your friends at the value you suggested, that of French gentlemen on a pleasurable excursion. I believed in you, and gave you a place in—in my most kindly affections,' she stammered; 'but I heard too many corroborative rumors to be able to overlook them. Your inquiries about this plant came to my ears, also that you had ventured into the abandoned mountain road. Then, when these suspicions were almost forgotten, a guest of ours and countryman of yours recognized you at the regatta and poured tales of your valor into my ears, until I became convinced that you would be the very men chosen for such a desperate mission as that of trying to steal my country's secret. I met you last night in wonder, still hoping my alarms were groundless. You made an appointment which, after your comrades had summoned you, you broke without reason. Then I knew this was the day on which you would invade this reserve.' She had hurried through her words in a breathless way, and now paused for what, in that tension, reckoned as a long time.

"It is hard to lose one's friends,' she said more softly. 'And yet one could not have held such knowledge as I had without being a traitor to one's country. I sacrificed you! I thought it out in the night, and when convinced of my reasoning decided to warn the superintendent of this plant, a friend of mine, by telephone. He at once took action to intercept you. I am sorry—so sorry!'

"For some reason a hatred of our ignoble duty and endeavor came to me with force as we stood there, and I should have spoken had not Lepard, with unaccustomed tenderness, answered her.

"Soldiers must do that which is given them to do. France is to me what your country is to you. We have played in a greater game than often comes, and—Mademoiselle, I can but honor you in our defeat. Here,' he went on abruptly and under impulse, 'I will save myself the disgrace of being searched or questioned. France would not want me to retain these at the expense of my conscience, to stand in your eyes forever a cad.'

"He thrust his hand into his hip pocket, his bared muscles moving with a quick, convulsive start, and withdrew a little roll. I gasped. They were the films he had taken! And to this day I know not whether they were of value; but of this I am certain, he made the last amende honorable that lay in his power.

A SOLDIER rapped at the door, entered, and handed Lepard his coat, which had been recovered. He donned it without looking at her: nor did she raise her eyes, but stood, white and panting, with the roll of records in her hand. The sharp puffing of an automobile was heard outside. The superintendent looked up, smiling slowly, and said:

"Gentlemen, permit me to tender you my machine. I am sorry, knowing how bravely you tried, that we cannot present you with the information you sought."

"We passed out, climbed stiffly into the tonneau, and were whirled away to our hotel. Our task was ended. We had been defeated by a mere slip of a girl who loved her country above all things and had crucified her heart, I am sure, on the splendid altar where other hearts have bled and other brave spirits put to the test and not found wanting."

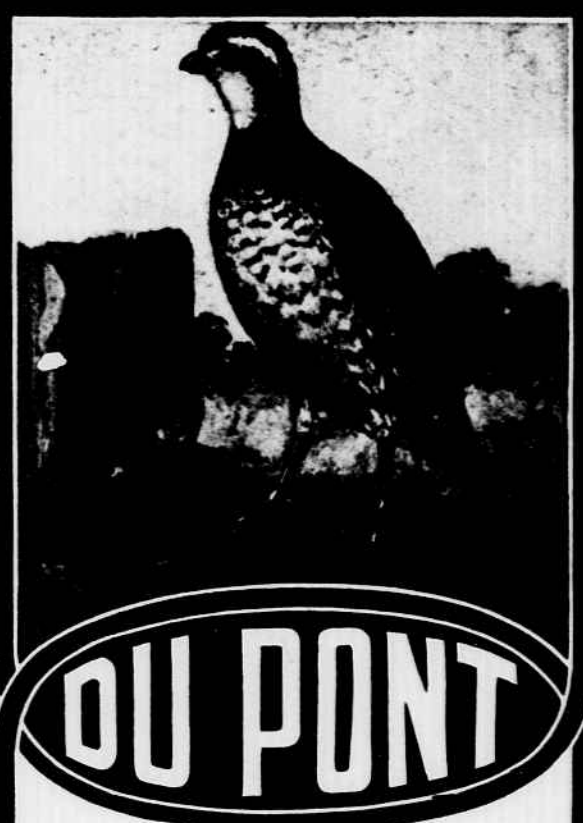
## OVER A LONG ROAD

A THEATRICAL manager in New York is difficult to reach for an interview, and those he does not care particularly to see seldom have the patience to stick it out until they win an audience.

One young woman had devoted almost a year to pulling wires and using all possible influence to gain an interview. At last her hopes were realized, and when she finally got her appointment she was ushered into the manager's private office.

He received her most graciously, spoke very pleasantly, and immediately offered her a chair. "Thank you," she said in a grateful tone, "I think I shall sit down. I have been just eleven months getting here, and I'll admit I'm a little tired."

This theatrical manager is really a great man. He has a broad sense of humor, and appreciated this reply so much that he immediately engaged her.



DU PONT

## SMOKELESS

is the most popular powder in the world.

## WHY?

Because it always does the work—

Breaks Old Records

Makes New Ones

It is the powder you should use for trap or field shooting.

Every dealer in the United States carries shells loaded with

## DU PONT SMOKELESS

Send 12 cents in stamps for a set of six Pictures illustrating "A Day's Hunt." Address Dept. U.

E. I. DU PONT DE NEMOURS POWDER CO.

Wilmington, Del., U. S. A.

## CONGRESS

PLAYING CARDS — Gold Edges —

NEW DESIGNS 90 Picture Backs LARGE INDEXES

50 Cents per Pack

## BICYCLE

PLAYING CARDS The Most Durable 25c Card Made.

More Sold Than All Others Combined. LARGE INDEXES

OFFICIAL RULES OF CARD GAMES, HOYLE UP TO DATE.

SENT FOR 15c IN STAMPS, OR 3 SEALS FROM CONGRESS WRAPPERS, OR 6 FLAP ENDS OF BICYCLE CASES DEPT. 1 THE U.S. PLAYING CARD CO. CINCINNATI, U.S.A.



We Trust You 10 Days \$1.85 Each. Send no money, write today for this handsome 14-inch, beautifully curled, carefully selected Curlew Feather, any color. If you find it a big bargain remit \$1.85 each, or sell 3 feathers and get your own free. Enclose 6c postage. Write for catalogue. ANNA AYERS Dept. 82, 21 Quincy St. CHICAGO